

ELEMENT 731: RHODE ISLAND NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION MANAGEMENT PLAN

01 INTRODUCTION

The State Planning Council adopted this plan as element 731 of the State Guide Plan on October 10, 1995. The plan updates and replaces Rhode Island's original Nonpoint Source Management Plan, which was prepared by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1989.

The plan's primary purposes are: to maintain the state's eligibility for federal funding under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act over the next four years; and to provide a vehicle for coordinating and integrating nonpoint source pollution control activities, both statewide and in high priority watersheds.

The plan was prepared with the assistance of eight Technical Advisory Subcommittees, which reviewed and commented on draft chapters. An Interagency Nonpoint Source Advisory Committee was responsible for final review and approval prior to submission to the Technical Committee and the State Planning Council.

02 ISSUES ADDRESSED

The plan addresses the protection and restoration of all waters of the state -- surface and ground waters -- that are threatened or impaired by nonpoint sources of pollution. It is divided into two principal parts: statewide management strategies and watershed management strategies.

03 GOALS

The goals identified in the plan are to:

- * Maintain a balanced approach between mitigating and preventing nonpoint source pollution in high-priority watersheds and aquifers.
- * Continue to address statewide nonpoint source pollution problems, while placing increased emphasis on watershed-based management.
- * Monitor and assess water quality and land use conditions and, based on this information, develop and implement specific nonpoint source pollution management strategies in high-priority watersheds and aquifers.
- * Strengthen public education efforts to increase awareness of nonpoint source pollution concerns and to enhance the role of citizens in addressing these concerns.
- * Provide technical assistance and training to facilitate implementation of nonpoint source pollution management activities.

- * Test and promote the use of new or alternative methods for managing nonpoint source pollution.
- * Improve the effectiveness of nonpoint source pollution management by enhancing coordination and collaboration among all applicable parties and programs.
- * Restore impaired aquatic habitats, beginning with high-priority watersheds.

04 POLICIES

The plan identifies and sets forth policies and recommendations for fourteen categories of nonpoint source pollution that are known to contribute, or have the potential to contribute, to water quality problems in Rhode Island. Due to their extensive number, the recommendations supporting the policies are not reprinted here.

SOURCE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems

Siting of New OSDS

POLICY 1.1 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from OSDS by directing placement of OSDS away from areas that are unsuitable.

Design of New OSDS

POLICY 1.2 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from OSDS by requiring OSDS designs that maximize treatment efficiency and effluent quality and facilitate proper maintenance.

Installation of New OSDS

POLICY 1.3 Ensure that new OSDS operate properly by using appropriate techniques and methodologies during installation and verifying that all systems are installed in accordance with approved designs.

Operation and Maintenance of Existing OSDS

POLICY 1.4 Ensure that existing OSDS are properly operated and maintained so as to minimize adverse water quality impacts and guard against system failures.

Failing and Malfunctioning OSDS

POLICY 1.5 Reduce pollutant inputs to ground and surface waters by ensuring that failing or malfunctioning OSDS are identified and then properly repaired, replaced, or modified.

2. Surface Runoff

POLICY 2.1 Properly manage the quantity and quality of surface runoff from new and existing development. Minimize pollution problems associated with runoff from new and existing development by preventing the release of pollutants to runoff, or, once released, by treating runoff to reduce the quantities of pollutants delivered to surface or groundwaters.

3. Underground Discharges

Location of New and Existing Discharges

POLICY 3.1 Minimize degradation to groundwater quality by directing locations of new underground discharges away from unsuitable areas and insuring all existing underground discharges are identified and addressed.

Design and Construction

POLICY 3.2 Minimize groundwater degradation by ensuring the proper design and construction of underground discharge systems.

Operation and Maintenance of Underground Discharge Sites

POLICY 3.3 Ensure that all UICs are operated and maintained in a manner that provides for effective protection of groundwater quality.

Oversight of Closures

POLICY 3.4 Maintain effective oversight of the closure of underground discharges in order to ensure that an evaluation is made of the impact to groundwater quality at the time of closure and that where contamination is confined, actions are taken to remove and remediate the affected soils or groundwater resource.

4. Construction Activities

Erosion and Sediment Control

POLICY 4.1 Minimize adverse water quality and habitat impacts resulting from construction and other land-disturbing activities by reducing erosion and preventing sedimentation.

Construction Materials

POLICY 4.2 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from the improper use, storage, and disposal of construction materials and other potential pollutants (besides sediment) associated with construction activities.

5. Agriculture

POLICY 5.1 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from agricultural activities by encouraging farmers to develop and implement site-specific plans that provide integrated solutions for all applicable nonpoint sources of pollution.

6. Lawn Care and Grounds Management

POLICY 6.1 Minimize, and where possible prevent, adverse water quality impacts by promoting the proper maintenance and management of lawns, golf courses, and other landscaped areas.

7. Silviculture

POLICY 7.1 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from forestry operations by ensuring that all loggers follow appropriate pollution prevention practices and procedures.

8. Storage Tanks

Underground Storage Tanks

POLICY 8.1 Minimize the opportunities for the release of petroleum products and other hazardous materials from underground storage tanks (USTs) by ensuring the proper siting, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of UST facilities.

Above-Ground Storage Tanks

POLICY 8.2 Minimize the opportunities for release of petroleum products and other hazardous materials from above-ground storage tanks (ASTs) by promoting and ensuring proper siting, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of AST facilities.

9. Hazardous Materials

POLICY 9.1 Minimize, and where possible prevent, adverse impacts to ground and surface waters by (A) reducing the use of toxic and hazardous materials, (B) promoting the substitution of non-hazardous alternatives, and (C) ensuring that hazardous materials are properly used, stored, handled, and disposed.

10. Road and Bridge Maintenance

POLICY 10.1 Minimize the impacts of runoff and associated pollutants from roads and bridges by undertaking proper operation and maintenance activities.

Road Salt Application and Storage

POLICY 10.2 Minimize adverse impacts to drinking water supplies by properly storing and applying de-icing materials.

11. Marine Boating Facilities and Activities

Siting and Design of New and Expanding Marinas and Mooring Fields

POLICY 11.1 Minimize adverse water quality and habitat impacts resulting from new or expanding marinas and mooring fields in waters suitable for the development and/or expansion of such facilities.

Operation and Maintenance Activities

POLICY 11.2 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from the operation and maintenance of boats and boating facilities by ensuring that proper operation and maintenance practices are followed.

12. Surface Mining Activities

POLICY 12.1 Minimize adverse impacts to surface and ground waters from pollutants associated with resource extraction operations.

13. Landfills

POLICY 13.1 Minimize the need for additional landfills by placing increased emphasis on source reduction, recycling, and pollution prevention.

POLICY 13.2 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from landfills by ensuring that new or expanded landfills are properly sited, designed, and constructed and that existing landfills are properly operated.

POLICY 13.3 Minimize adverse water quality impacts resulting from existing landfills by ensuring that, upon reaching capacity, all landfills are properly closed.

14. Domestic and Wild Animals

POLICY 14.1 Manage domestic animal excrement to minimize runoff into surface waters.

LAND USE MANAGEMENT

The plan also sets forth policies for land use management as it relates to impacts on water quality.

Growth Management Planning

POLICY 2.1 Through municipal land use management programs, carefully plan for and manage new growth to minimize land use impacts on water quality.

Creative Land Management Techniques

POLICY 3.1 Enhance growth management, protect water quality, and preserve other critical resources by adopting and implementing innovative and effective land use management techniques as part of municipal land use management programs.

ADMINISTRATION

The plan also sets policies and makes recommendations with respect to the administration, coordination, and enhancement of nonpoint source pollution management. It identifies the key public sector agencies, groups, and organizations in Rhode Island that carry out programs relating to NPS management; and provides a generalized implementation schedule for addressing the recommendations dealing with the fourteen categories of nonpoint source pollution, as well as land use management.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In that part of the plan dealing with watershed management strategies, the plan sets forth a targeted, watershed-based approach for addressing nonpoint source pollution problems and concerns in high priority watersheds and groundwater areas. The plan outlines the basic principles of watershed management and lists a series of steps that can be followed in order to carry out the process. A ranking system for selecting high-priority watersheds and groundwater areas is also provided.

RESTORATION OF AQUATIC HABITATS

This section of the plan addresses the restoration of aquatic habitats. It sets forth a broad range of potential aquatic habitat restoration activities that should be considered for the purpose of implementing broad-based watershed management activities.

Water Quality Concerns

POLICY 3.1 Restore impaired aquatic habitats in priority areas, to the extent possible.